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NEWS FROM THE HOME OFFICE

COMMENTS FROM THE CHIEF

I have long felt that many of you are out of touch with your headquarters—isolated too much from news of such things as organizational developments, personnel matters, new career opportunities, and the like. I realize that items appearing in the press may cause conjecture, if not concern. This letter from the home office is an effort to satisfy, as much as any such informal letter can, the need for the type of news not covered in the usual dispatches. It will be issued quarterly.

Another, and more personal, reason for sending you periodically a letter such as this is that it will give me an opportunity to write some of the things about our job and progress I would say face to face if I could. One such is the fact that we are being given increasing responsibilities as our growing professionalism is recognized. I am pleased yet greatly impressed by this; however, with the recognition of our capabilities goes a confidence in and dependence on us that can only make us resolve to live up to the trust shown in us and our work.

I question
advisability I also want to use these letters to give you pertinent information about my principal assistants and their duties. I hope that this will convey some of the complexities of our jobs as well as the high order of the men who fill them.

Bring up
to date ✓ To bring you up to date on the Washington scene, proposals for new bridges plus the constant pressure to get rid of temporary buildings have stepped up plans for a new building to house the organization. Several committees have been looking into our affairs. They have completed their work and their findings were by and large commendatory. Where deficiencies were found, the spirit of their reports was such as to be most constructive.

Budgetary and manpower cuts in other organizations may increase further the dependence on our efforts and will make it more apparent that we are among those who help form the first line of defense. At the same time, we must remain essentially a small organization and must depend not on numbers but on the competence of the relatively few. We cannot, therefore, afford to be mediocre, either organizationally or individually. Since one of the best ways to improve our ability is through training, I wish all of you would give thought to the courses you will be able to take when you return.

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- 2 -

REORGANIZATION OF SUPPORT ELEMENTS

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Correct

A major organizational change in headquarters came about recently when the elements which support all our activities were consolidated under a deputy director. There were several considerations made in bringing this about. The most important reason for the change is the concept of central support to all our activities which was at the base of the decision to re-organize. This centralized direction of the support elements will insure maximum efficiency and economy from the support point of view in the development and fulfillment of all of our diverse activities, whereas previously certain elements of the support function had been decentralized at some cost and had resulted in some duplication of effort. Under this arrangement the support elements and the planners will work hand-in-glove not only during the planning phases but also throughout the period during which a given project is in effect. The major support elements making up this new grouping are personnel, administration, communications, finance, security, management, medical, supply, training, and the legal advisers. To insure continuity of the new support-planning process, these elements are organized into a support committee which back-stops the planning board of the organization. It is now engaged in examining our programs for 1956 and 1957 to insure that these projects can be properly supported when approved for action. There is an additional advantage in that training, communications and personnel now have direct representation in the chief's staff meetings which occur three times a week.

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TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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One of the best ways in which we can increase our individual competence as well as develop in a career sense is by making sure that we are adequately prepared for our present and future jobs. Our training people have made steady progress in building the programs required to increase our capability to perform effectively. New courses have been established in many subjects, among them a review course to bring returnees up to date on headquarters organization and developments. Others are being planned and developed, particularly in the fields of area background and foreign languages. The recently published catalog of courses lists all the courses and kinds of training available. All of you have the responsibility and the privilege of helping to plan your future training. By considering now what you feel you should take when you return and by notifying headquarters of your preferences, you can assure yourself of being enrolled in those courses essential to your career development.

increase your chances

One of the ways you may request training is by using the questionnaire form (Field Reassignment Form No. 20, dated 1 September 1954) which we ask all employees scheduled to return home to complete eight months before their departure. Although we cannot promise to fulfill completely your request for training or future assignments, your desires will be given careful consideration.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

LOOKING TOWARD OUR FUTURE

Elsewhere on these pages is information on certain items which will make this organization a better place in which to work. Some of these developments are the result of long internal study, while others are advantages accruing to us through legislative action. There is a third source of improvement to which we are also looking for advancement of our cause. That source is YOU.

How conscientiously do you execute Fitness Reports on your subordinates? Ineffective or marginal employees do you or the organization little good. The only way we can identify them and take appropriate action is through accurate and objective personnel ratings by supervisors. Intriguing but unproductive operations may be challenging but they are wasteful of men and money. The man running them should know them best and assess them properly. You can make continuing and significant contributions to our progress by a few moments of analysis before you undertake many official actions.

INCENTIVE AWARDS

Legislation recently enacted means that our Incentive Awards Committee can give larger awards than it was able to give in the past. Under the new system we can give awards up to \$5,000, with awards up to \$25,000 possible if the Civil Service Commission approves. In addition, Presidential awards may be given for exceptionally meritorious suggestions, inventions, superior accomplishments, and special acts or services. Thus, these cash awards are substituted for the previous system of within-grade salary increases. Those of you who may have suggestions for improvements of the "idea or invention" or "performance" type are urged to send them in to the Incentive Awards Committee. Also, supervisors are urged to be on the lookout for "superior accomplishments" and "special acts or services" which could be the basis for recommendations for awards.

In addition to the above mentioned awards, we also have our own honor awards which are granted to our personnel who perform acts of valor or who make highly significant contributions to our work.

REDUCTION COST FOR DEPENDENTS OVERSEAS

We are now able to provide a limited amount of financial assistance toward the cost of education for dependants of employees overseas. However, at the present time, we are greatly restricted in the amount of financial assistance we can give. It is realized here that in some cases the lack of such aid can work inequities or even handicap your work. If you are one of those who have not been included in this coverage, please be patient. We are doing all we can at the home office to broaden the basis for this assistance. Notice [redacted] dated 15 November 1954, outlines the general criteria for financial assistance which must be met in order that this allowance may be authorized. Those employees having problems concerning schooling for their children should consult that notice for further details.

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- 4 -

FEDERAL PAY INCREASE

The new annual rates of pay, in the first step, are: (old rates are shown in parenthesis)

GS-4 \$3415 (3175); GS-5 \$3670 (3410); GS-6 \$4080 (3795); GS-7 \$4525 (4205);
GS-8 \$4970 (4620); GS-9 \$5440 (5060); GS-11 \$6390 (5940); GS-12 \$7570 (7040);
GS-13 \$8990 (8360); GS-14 \$10320 (9600); GS-15 \$11610 (10800).

REIMBURSEMENT FOR HOSPITAL EXPENSE

Any staff employee who has the misfortune of being hospitalized for illnesses or injuries incurred while assigned permanently to an overseas post may be entitled to reimbursement of the cost of hospitalization. If you should be hospitalized for causes which you believe justly entitle you to such reimbursement, submit your claim through administrative channels. Include in your claim the following data: itemized bills and receipts, a detailed statement of the facts and circumstances surrounding the illness or injury, and a medical statement from the attending physician where possible.

CAREER STAFF

As you read in [REDACTED] a ceremony inaugurating the Career Staff was held recently. The Inspector General presented the first certificate of membership to the Chief who then presented membership certificates to fifteen staff employees representing the Career Services within the organization. Approximately 99 percent of our employees who are eligible wish to become members of the Career Staff. As of now, over 1000 applications have been approved and action is being taken at the rate of about 3 percent on the remainder each month. If you have applied for membership and have not heard as yet whether or not you have been accepted, we hope that you will understand that it will take a long time before this large backlog of applications can be eliminated. Don't be worried if your application has not been acted upon first. "Date of rank" is of no importance as far as Career Staff membership is concerned.

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